
Introduction

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WHILE I HAVE AUTHORED SEVERAL books, reports, and articles relating to electronic publishing over the last twenty years, the specific topic of this issue of *Library Trends*—a networked approach to scholarly publishing drew my interest in 1992 while preparing an article on the future of collection development in libraries. In compiling this issue, I have attempted to obtain contributions that look at the subject from many different perspectives.

In the first article, I review developments in electronic publishing, with special reference to the electronic journal, from the 1960s to the present.

In the next article, Tom Hickey describes the current capabilities of online journals and discusses their advantages and disadvantages as compared with print-on-paper journals. Among the major advantages of the online journal are ease and speed of publication, enhanced presentation of information (e.g., through hypertext links and color graphics), and immediacy of communication between readers and authors. He refers to possible future capabilities and mentions problems that still need to be solved before a more complete conversion from paper to electronics occurs.

Ann Bishop looks at seven online journals from a user's perspective, dealing with content, format, policies, ease of use, and general utility. She claims that the existing journals, while they still present some problems, are beginning to offer several advantages over print journals, and she identifies some requirements that scholarly network journals should satisfy in the future.

In order to succeed, the online journal must be capable of meeting the needs of both authors and readers. As Carol Tenopir points out, these needs are not always compatible. She concludes that scholarly communication can be successful without complete harmony between the needs of author and reader. This is true of the world of print on paper and can also be true of the electronic environment.

An online journal need not be considered as a medium of communication that stands on its own. Indeed, such a journal in a specialized subject area can be a central component in an online intellectual community. Teresa Harrison and Timothy Stephen discuss this phenomenon, pointing out that the electronic journal has an important role to play in facilitating the routine discourse processes of scholarly communities. Moreover, the move to this medium will change the way that scholars read, write, and do research; it will also change the form of research products.

Kenneth Arnold agrees that electronic publishing will significantly alter publication forms and may eliminate distinctions that now exist among various forms. He points out that the impediments to change are cultural rather than economic or technological.

As more and more scholarly literature becomes network-accessible, a significant problem becomes that of effective access. Stuart Weibel addresses the access issues, including the display and indexing of structural text and the relationship of existing standards for bibliographic description to emerging standards for the description of networked information resources.

Bryce Allen deals with the need for collaboration among the various academic departments, his viewpoint being primarily that of the academic library. He identifies three barriers to collaboration: clashes of organizational cultures, personal incompatibilities, and different approaches to change. He believes that academic libraries can move into a pivotal role in the generation, collection, distribution, and use of scholarly information.

Gay Dannelly addresses the issue of library resource sharing in an increasingly electronic publishing environment. She points out that the challenge facing libraries is to find organizational models, procedures, and mechanisms to enhance the ability of library users to find the information resources they need wherever they happen to be located.

One possible impediment to the rapid move to electronic publishing is the copyright issue, addressed here by Laura Gasaway. She suggests that the publication of scholarly works through university-managed networks promises to offer innovative solutions to the copyright problem and "restore the balance between the rights of authors and publishers."

Archival and preservation issues are discussed by Maynard Brichford and William Maher. They point out that preservation is more a problem of access to information than of the survival of any particular storage medium—a matter of editorial and administrative policy rather than a technical or materials issue. In dealing with the transition to electronic publishing, archivists will need to confront and employ rapidly changing technologies, face legal issues surrounding authenticity and property rights, recognize the necessity for the early incorporation of preservation measures into information systems, and serve clienteles that expect rapid access to archival holdings.

It is obvious that the acceptability of a scholarly publishing system that is network-based will depend very largely on the costs to users. Donald King and José-Marie Griffiths discuss economic factors that relate to scholarly journals in general and to their publication in electronic form in particular. They point out that we still need a more complete understanding of the effects of electronic alternatives on the systemic and economic dynamics of scholarly publishing.

In the final article, I present the results of a survey of attitudes toward networked scholarly publishing among academic administrators, concluding that universities are not yet ready to give such an enterprise high priority in funding.